

James Madison to Edmund Randolph, October 17, 1788. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH. CHIC. HIST. SOC. MSS.

New York, October 17, 1788.

Dear Sir,

I have a letter from Mazzei & one from Mr. Jefferson which you will be good enough to dispose of. I have one from the former in which he begs me to add my importunities to you and Mr. Blair for speedy succour if possible. I have one from the latter but it contains nothing of much consequence. His public letters to which it refers have not yet been communicated from the office of Foreign Affairs. Through other authentic channels I learn that the States General will pretty certainly be convened in May next. The efficacy of that cure for the public maladies will depend materially on the mode in which the deputies may be selected, which appears to be not yet settled. There is good reason also to presume, that, as the spirit which at present agitates the nation has been in a great measure caught from the American Revolution, so the result of the struggle there will be not a little affected by the character which liberty may receive from the experiment now on foot here. The tranquil and successful establishment of a great reform by the reason of the community, must give as much force to the doctrines urged on one side as a contrary event would do to the policy maintained on the other.

As Col. Carrington will be with you before this gets to hand, I leave it with him to detail all matters of a

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date previous to his departure. Of a subsequent date I recollect nothing worth adding. I requested him also to confer with you in full confidence on the appointments to the Senate and House of Representatives, so far as my friends may consider me in relation to either. He is fully possessed of my real sentiments, and will explain them more conveniently than can be done on paper. I mean not to decline an agency in launching the new Government if such should be assigned me in one of the Houses, and I prefer the House of Representatives, chiefly because, if I can render any service there, it can only be to the public, and, not even in imputation, to myself. At the same time my preference, I own, is somewhat founded on the supposition that the arrangements for the popular elections may secure me against any competition which would require on my part any step that would speak a solicitude which I do not feel, or have the appearance of a spirit of electioneering which I despise.

I am led not only by a want of matter but by a cut I have just given my thumb and which makes writing tedious and disagreeable to conclude, with assurances of affection I am &c.